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QUESTION OF PALESTINE
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Note verbale dated 31 July 1998 from the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and has the honour to transmit herewith the final declaration of the seventeenth session of the Al-Quds Committee, held in Casablanca, Morocco, on 29-30 July 1998, and to request that it be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the agenda items relating to the question of Al-Quds, the situation in the occupied Arab territories and the question of the Middle East, and of the Security Council.

* A/53/150.

Final communiqué and recommendations of the 17th session of the Al-Quds Committee

Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco

4-5 Rabiul Akhar 1419H (29-30 July 1998)

In response to a generous invitation from His Majesty King Hassan II, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco and Chairman of Al-Quds Committee, the Committee held its seventeenth (17th) session in the city of Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, on 4-5 Rabiul Akhar 1419H, 29-30 July 1998, to consider the critical juncture the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif was going through - the Islamic Ummah's prime cause - as a result of the Israeli occupation authorities' persistence in implementing their scheme designed to judaize the Holy City by having recourse to various ways and means and carrying out unilateral acts to alter the normal demographic and geographic status of the City and place the international community before a new fait accompli, prior to the negotiations on the definitive solution for the City and to influence their outcome.

Took part in the Committee's deliberations His Excellency President Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine, Their Highnesses and Excellencies the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, delegations from the Committee Member States, and His Excellency Dr. Azzeddine Laraki, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

His Majesty King Hassan II, Chairman of Al-Quds Committee, opened the Committee's proceedings by highlighting the dangerous juncture which the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif has been going through. His Majesty called on the members of the Committee to adopt a new approach as required by the Arab-Islamic events which warrant the adoption of specific decisions. His Majesty further stated that a series of measures had been finalized with respect to Bayt Al-Mal of Al-Quds, the executive body of which has now been set up and which now has its headquarters and bank accounts. It will start discharging its mission immediately.

In His address, His Excellency President Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine thanked His Majesty King Hassan II for having called Al-Quds Committee to convene at this critical juncture wherein Al-Quds Al-Sharif is facing a clear threat of judaization, confronted to demographic and geographic changes, and being isolated from its Arab environment. He called for concerted efforts to save the Holy City from the Israeli occupation.

The heads of delegations then took the floor, emphasizing the serious consequences of the Israeli Government's illegal decisions and measures applied to Al-Quds Al-Sharif, particularly its latest decision pertaining to the expansion of the boundaries of Al-Quds Municipality.

In the light of the deliberations of its members, the Committee reaffirmed its total solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in its just struggle to end the Israeli occupation and re-establish the Palestinian people's inalienable national rights, including their right to return, to self-

determination and to statehood on their national soil with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as their capital. The Committee also expressed its support to the Middle East peace process and to the implementation of the agreements signed in that framework between the parties concerned along with all the commitments and pledges made on the basis of the principles of the Madrid Conference, in accordance with the United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolution Nos. 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), as well as the "land for peace" formula which calls for Israel's immediate, total and unconditional withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the Syrian Golan back to the 4 June 1967 line and occupied Lebanese territories in accordance with Security Council resolution 425. It further stressed the need for Israel to honour the commitments it made during the negotiations and resume talks on the Syrian track from where they had ended.

Al-Quds Al-Sharif is part and parcel of the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 - and that all that applied to the rest of the occupied territories applied to it as per the relevant United Nations decisions until the restoration of Palestinian sovereignty on Al-Quds Al-Sharif as the capital of the state of Palestine.

All legislative, administrative and settlement-related steps and measures which are designed to alter the legal status of the Holy City are null and void and inconsistent with the decisions of international legitimacy and with international conventions and covenants and contrary to the agreements signed by the Palestinian and Israeli parties.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

1. The Committee called on the Security Council to ensure the implementation of its resolutions on the protection of the status of Al-Quds, lay down mechanisms for the implementation of its resolution No. 1073 (1996) and take the necessary steps to be taken to ensure the follow up by the Security Council concerning the implementation of the content of the presidential statement issued by the Security Council on 13 July 1998, including adoption of appropriate decisions and measures in compliance with the United Nations Charter, in view of the fact that the steps taken by Israel in Al-Quds constitute a violation of the basic principle for peace in the Middle East as well as a threat to international peace and security and an act of aggression.

2. The Committee requested the international community, especially the sponsors of the peace process, the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, the European Union and Non-Aligned countries to take a firm stand in confronting the Israeli siege of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and halt all the measures, practices and unilateral decisions aimed at judaizing the city, besieging it and isolating it from its Palestinian environment, and to endeavour for the lifting of the siege.

3. The Committee urged all countries to comply with Security Council resolution 478 (1980) calling on them to refrain from moving their diplomatic missions to the City of Al-Quds and to avoid dealing with the Israeli occupation authorities in any manner that may be construed in any way, as a tacit admission of the fait accompli imposed by Israel which considered the City of Al-Quds as

its capital. In this context, the Committee rejected the recommendation of the U.S. House of Representatives concerning the recognition of Al-Quds as the unified capital of Israel and the transfer of the American Embassy to Al-Quds.

4. The Committee urged those Islamic countries which have taken steps to normalize relations with Israel in the context of the peace process to reconsider such relations with Israel and, inter alia, to close their missions and offices until Israel complied with United Nations resolutions and carried out the agreements, pledges and commitments reached by the parties to the peace process.

5. The Committee invited the Vatican to refuse to extend recognition to Al-Quds as Israel's capital. It further called on the Eastern and other churches and Christian religious orders to contribute to efforts aimed at resisting the judaization of the City of Al-Quds so as to respect all celestial religious shrines and to preserve peaceful coexistence amongst themselves.

6. The Committee called on the Security Council to revive the International Supervision and Control Committee entrusted with preventing settlement activities in Al-Quds and the other occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, in accordance with resolution 446 (1979).

7. The Committee welcomed the invitation extended by the Swiss Government to hold, before the end of the current year, a meeting of the High Signatory Parties of the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949 on the protection of civilians in times of war in order to take the necessary measures to ensure the observance of the Agreement in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

8. The Committee urged all States that extend economic and financial assistance to Israel, especially the United States of America, EU countries and international donor institutions and funds to halt their assistance which is used by Israel to carry out its colonial settlement schemes and designs in the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories as well as the Syrian Golan.

9. The Committee expressed its appreciation for the stand which was adopted by the European Union in refraining from importing any products originating from Al-Quds and Israeli settlements and called on the other countries to adopt the same attitude in compliance with the resolutions of international Law.

10. The Committee called upon all the countries to recognize the state of Palestine upon its proclamation on the land of Palestine pursuant to international Law; it highly valued the support of international community in raising the status of representation of Palestine in the United Nations and considered it a step in this direction.

11. The Committee urged the Islamic States to extend further support to the Palestinian national institutions and the Palestinian people with a view to enabling it to protect the Islamic and Christian sanctities, preserve the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and its civilizational, historical and religious heritage, and to support its steadfastness and its resistance to the Israeli occupation and settlement schemes.

12. The Committee called upon the Member States, the Islamic financial institutions, banks and funds, as well as companies and individuals to extend generous assistance in support of Bayt Al-Mal of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. It also urged them to conduct public donation campaigns for the benefit of Al-Quds Al-Sharif in order to allow the institutions and departments of Al-Quds to continue playing their role in supporting the steadfastness of the inhabitants of the Holy city in the face of occupation.

13. The Committee urged the OIC Member States to speed up the implementation of the Islamic Conference resolutions inviting the Member States to extend their voluntary contributions with the aim to cover the capital of Al-Quds fund and its waqf, each amounting to one million US dollars.

14. The Committee welcomed the nomination by His Majesty King Hassan II, Chairman of Al-Quds Committee, of Mr. Wajih Hassan Al Qassim as Director of Bayt Al-Mal of Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

15. The Committee endorsed the trusteeship committee of Bayt Al-Mal of Al-Quds Al-Sharif provided for under Article 6 of the statute with the following membership:

1.	State of Palestine	(Permanent Member)
2.	Kingdom of Morocco	(Permanent Member)
3.	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	(For a period of three years)
4.	Islamic Republic of Iran	(For a period of three years)
5.	Republic of Senegal	(For a period of three years)

16. The Committee called upon Bayt Al-Mal of Al-Quds to take steps to start discharging its duties as specified in its status, including collection of donations and the possibility of issuing bonds in accordance with the provisions of Islamic Law. Such a Fund shall contribute to financing steadfastness operations in Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

The Committee expressed its deep appreciation and gratitude to its Chairman, His Majesty King Hassan II, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco, for the continuous efforts He has been and is still exerting at all Arab, Islamic and international levels to promote and uphold the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif and also for the gracious invitation extended by His Majesty for this important session to convene in the city of Casablanca.

The Committee also expressed its deep gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty's Government and the brotherly people of Morocco for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to the participating delegations.